

VEHICLE SHOULDER-STRAP COVER WITH DISPLAY POCKET

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

[0001] This application is a continuation of Patent Application No. 10/054,264 entitled VEHICLE CROSSBAR/SHOULDER-STRAP COVER WITH DISPLAY POCKET, filed January 21, 2002, by Daniel L. Durham, the entire disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] This invention pertains to display devices that are releasably mountable to a vehicle component, and more particularly to a device for displaying printed material which is mountable to a vehicle shoulder strap.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] It is often desirable to view a map, photograph, instructions, and/or other printed material while riding, driving or being seated in a vehicle such as an automobile or the like. For example, it may be desirable to view a map and/or instructions to a destination while on route to the destination. Typically, a driver or passenger will place maps and/or instructions to a destination in a door pocket, glove box or other compartment or bin of the vehicle for subsequent retrieval while on route to the destination. A problem with this approach is that the driver or passenger may have difficulty retrieving the map and/or instructions while driving or riding in the vehicle, either because the driver or passenger has forgotten where the map and/or instructions were placed or because the map and/or instructions were placed in a location which is not easily accessible from a seated position in the vehicle. It may be especially difficult for a driver to retrieve printed materials from a compartment or bin while driving.

[0004] Accordingly, it would be desirable to provide a device that can be used to display and/or stow printed materials, such as maps, notes, instructions, photographs and the like, and which can be easily and releasably attached to a vehicle component for easy retrieval and/or viewing.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0005] The invention provides a device for displaying printed material and which is configured to be releasably attached to a component of a vehicle thereby facilitating accessibility and/or viewability of the printed material to a driver or a passenger seated in the vehicle.

[0006] The device includes a flexible base sheet, a flexible panel superposed over at least a portion of the flexible base sheet and secured to the flexible base sheet along at least two opposing edges of the flexible panel to form a pocket having an opening along at least one edge of the flexible panel, wherein either the flexible base sheet or the flexible panel is transparent, and a releasable fastener connected to the flexible base sheet to allow repeated releasable attachment of the device to a component of a vehicle. Printed material may be inserted into the pocket and viewed through at least one of the flexible base sheet or the flexible panel while the device is releasably attached to a vehicle component, such as a shoulder strap.

[0007] These and other features, advantages and objects of the present invention will be further understood and appreciated by those skilled in the art by reference to the following specification, claims and appended drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0008] Fig. 1 is fragmented perspective view of a second embodiment of the invention being used as a shoulder-strap comfort pad.

[0009] Fig. 2 is a top view of the device shown in Fig. 1.

[0010] Fig. 3 is a cross sectional view of the device shown in Figs. 1 and 2, as viewed along lines 3-3 of Fig. 2.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0011] An embodiment of the invention suited for use as a combination display device and shoulder-strap comfort pad is shown in Figs. 1-3. Device 110 has a pocket for displaying printed material 112, and is adapted to be wrapped around a vehicle shoulder strap 114. Flexible base sheet 120 is comprised of a cloth or fabric material that is relatively thick and soft to provide a cushioning effect when device 110 is wrapped around shoulder strap 114. The cushioning or padding effect of device 110 reduces discomfort associated with use of a vehicle shoulder strap 114. Base sheet 120 may be made of any of a variety of fabrics such as

felt, felt-like materials, corduroy, and other materials, or composite materials, such as a composite comprising a cloth liner, a cloth outer fabric, and a relatively thin flexible foam material disposed between the liner and the outer fabric material.

[0012] If device 110 is intended solely or primarily for use as a display device that is releasably attachable to a component such as a shoulder belt, without regard to, or with little regard to, reducing discomfort associated with use of a vehicle shoulder strap, then base sheet 120 may be made from any sheet material having sufficient pliability and/or flexibility to allow device 110 to be wrapped around a component such as a shoulder belt. However, if device 110 is intended to serve dual functions, including display of printed material 110 and reducing discomfort associated with use of vehicle shoulder straps, then base sheet 120 is selected base on both flexibility and cushioning criteria.

[0013] In the device 110 illustrated in Figs. 1-3, a pocket 122 is attached to base sheet 120. Pocket 122 comprises overlapping rectangular panels joined together along three edges 124, 125 and 126 forming seam joints 128, 129 and 130. Overlapping edges 127 are not attached to each other to provide an opening to the pocket. Pocket 122 may be secured to base sheet 120 using any suitable technique such as adhesives, thermal fusion, ultrasonic welding, stitches, staples, etc.

[0014] Device 110 includes releasable fasteners comprising a hook strip 140 and a loop strip 142, although other fastening devices suitable for repeatedly connecting and disconnecting the edges of the device may be used.

[0015] The above description is considered that of the preferred embodiments only. Modifications of the invention will occur to those skilled in the art and to those who make or use the invention. Therefore, it is understood that the embodiments shown in the drawings and described above are merely for illustrative purposes and not intended to limit the scope of the invention, which is defined by the following claims as interpreted according to the principles of patent law, including the doctrine of equivalents.